MAY-JUNE 2002

## In the News

# Leading the Way In Juvenile Court

A recent story in the San Jose

Mercury News highlighted
the many initiatives being implemented by the Superior Court of
San Mateo County Juvenile
Court and its supervising judge,
Marta S. Diaz.

The article, "Judge Makes Changes in Youth Court" (March 13), announced the opening of the court's assessment center, where every juvenile arrested in the county is interviewed by a team of specialists focusing on the youth's mental, physical, and emotional health. The story also mentions the children's waiting rooms the court has set up at its hall of justice and juvenile court locations.

"The article was a result of a press release sent out by our community outreach coordinator, Jill Selvaggio," reports Judge Diaz. "The release announced the grand opening of both our assessment center and the new children's waiting room in San Mateo. I was able to speak to the reporter and share some of the other programs we've implemented in the juvenile court."

The reporter touched on other initiatives by Judge Diaz, such as the Kids Learning Empathy and Respect program, in which peer mediations focus on how discrimination feels. The article also mentioned that Judge Diaz had arranged for the court-room walls to be stripped of their dark paneling and painted a more soothing pistachio color.

The community gained awareness of the changes taking place in its juvenile justice system as a result of the press release and the ensuing article.

Other court-related events in the news:

"Court Creates a Safe Place for Seniors," Recorder (San Francisco), February 22, 2002

Detailed how the Superior Court of Alameda County, working with other local organizations, created a separate calendar for elderly litigants to obtain restraining orders.

"Judge Presents Council With County Court Facts," News-Messenger (Lincoln), February 14, 2002

Reported on Superior Court of Placer County Judge James Garbolino's delivery of the court's



A recent story in the San Jose *Mercury News* described the Superior Court of San Mateo County's new Juvenile Assessment Center. Pictured is the interview room, where juveniles arrested in the county are seen by a team of specialists focusing on the youths' mental, physical, and emotional health. *Photo: Courtesy of the Superior Court of San Mateo County* 

first State of the Courts message to the Roseville City Council.

"County Superior Courts
Receive \$75,000 in
Grants," Reporter (Vacaville),
February 11, 2002

Announced that the Superior Court of Solano County had received a grant to improve its methods of providing information to the public.

**Mental Health Courts Impress,"** *Press Enterprise* (Riverside), February 4, 2002

Described the Superior Court of

Riverside County's mental health court, which aims to assist the community by treating, instead of jailing, mentally ill people.

"Mental Health Court Offers New Options," Los Angeles Times, January 4, 2002

Reported on the Superior Court of Los Angeles County's juvenile mental health court, where the judge orders treatment and monitoring to minimize youths' chances of additional run-ins with the law.

# Courts Managing HR Data

Anew project is under way that promises the courts faster access to human resources (HR) information.

In April the Administrative Office of the Courts' (AOC) Human Resources Division began collaborating with the superior courts to build a human resources management information system (HRMIS) for the judicial branch. The new system will be flexible

enough to function regionally as well as statewide.

The final configuration of the judicial branch HRMIS will depend on the courts' specific functional and technical requirements. Some of the HRMIS capabilities to be explored by the courts and the AOC are:

☐ A two-way data exchange between the HR system and a third-party payroll system (if needed), which could include a wide range of functions for human resources, benefits, compensation, and savings plans;

☐ Budgeting support for salary planning, which would allow for the creation of several budgets for the same period as well as multiple salary structures (e.g., salaried and hourly employees);

☐ Sophisticated report-

generating capabilities that enable employers to prepare ad hoc as well as mandatory periodic reports such as census, labor force, OSHA, and EEO compliance reports;

☐ Streamlining of recruitment and elimination of redundancies and delays for applicants, employees, managers, and recruiters;

☐ "Skill matching" to support recruitment, training, and succession planning; and

☐ Automatic triggers and notification procedures (using e-mail, for example) to track complex business or employee events such as hiring, termination, and performance evaluation.

The HRMIS project consists of three phases: (1) a consultant-conducted statewide HRMIS and HR needs assessment, including a court-by-court review of HR management systems, staffing, division of labor, and technology needs; (2) a vendor selection and feasibility study; and (3) implementation.

The AOC's Human Resources Division anticipates that the initial assessment phase will begin July 1.

 For more information on the HRMIS project, contact Hazel Ann Reimche, project manager, 415-865-4263; e-mail: hazel .ann.reimche@jud.ca.gov.

## **AOC Pilots Trial Court Financial System**

With assistance from ea consulting, inc., the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is designing an electronic financial system for the state's trial courts, using SAP, a financial software developed at MIT. The AOC anticipates that the SAP system will deliver real-time information that will meet the daily accounting needs of the courts.

Given the historic development of California's superior courts, it is natural that most are currently using county-provided financial systems. These systems often lack statewide or AOC reporting functions.

To remedy the situation, in December 1999 the AOC began to design a statewide system. As part of

that project, and with assistance from the trial courts, the AOC developed the *Trial Court Financial Policies and Procedures Manual,* containing uniform, statewide guidelines. In addition, the AOC conducted a needs assessment and issued a request for proposals so that it could select a financial consultant to help with the design of the new electronic system.

The Superior Court of Stanislaus County agreed to assist the AOC with the initial design and testing of the SAP system. If this pilot project is deemed successful, the Stanislaus court will become the first to implement the new system, in fiscal year 2002–2003. The AOC's goal is to im-

plement the new system for all courts within the next three to five years.

As the project develops, the AOC plans to establish regional off-site accounting processing centers (APCs) to handle the transaction processing required for the new system. The APCs will replace the current day-to-day accounting transaction processing performed by the county, and will provide knowledgeable staff to assist the courts. In addition, over the next six months, the **AOC's Trial Court Fiscal Services Unit** will continue to perform accounting assessments of the courts to determine a statewide rollout strategy for the new system.

● For more information, contact the AOC's Finance Division, 415-865-7960. COURT NEWS MAY-JUNE 2002

# AOC Offers Facility Services to the Courts

Help is on the way. The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is expanding its facilities consultation program to provide courts with more assistance in courthouse construction and renovation.

"An AOC representative was able to participate in meetings with architects and our entire design team," says Mary Beth Todd, Executive Officer of the Superior Court of Calaveras County, which recently utilized the AOC's facility services. "We found their input extremely helpful."

Although the Task Force on Court Facilities' final report to the Legislature last year recommended that the state take over responsibility for trial court buildings, the counties have the primary responsibility for providing "necessary and suitable facilities for judicial and court support positions." (Gov. Code, § 68073.)

Until there is a change in responsibility for court buildings, the AOC's Facilities Unit will serve as a professional resource and an advocate for the courts by helping them identify their facility needs and representing those needs to their counties. The expanded Facilities Unit includes professionally trained and licensed architects, planners, designers, analysts, and administrative personnel. It is led by Kim Davis, A.I.A., Assistant Director of Finance, who oversees the Facilities Unit, and Robert Emerson, P.E., unit manager.

The AOC's Facilities Unit is assisting the courts by:

- ☐ Helping select architectural, design, and engineering consultants for trial court projects;
- ☐ Advocating on behalf of the courts in matters pertaining to the condition or uses of existing courthouse facilities;
- ☐ Guiding the courts and counties in the use of the Trial Court Facility Guidelines (pub-

lished as part of the work of the Task Force on Court Facilities and adopted by the Judicial Council to be effective July 1, 2002) for new courthouses or for renovations of existing courthouses; and

☐ Meeting with county architects and planners regarding ongoing projects for the courts.

The Superior Court of Calaveras County asked the AOC to review its early plans for a new courthouse building. The Facilities Unit sent one of its facilities planners to the court to review all of the functional and space requirements of the court. He then compared that information to the courtrooms and support areas proposed as part of the new design. He looked at the numbers and locations of courtrooms, staffing projections, and the sizes and configurations of support spaces, such as a central holding area, children's waiting rooms, and parking areas.

The planner's review revealed some areas where the design of the new building, proposed as a shared facility for the county and the courts, could be improved at that early stage for optimal long-term use. Using as a basis reports developed for courthouse planning by the Task Force on Court Facilities, the planner provided feedback about design features.

"He was able to cut through a lot of the technical language so we could better understand the process and provide input into the project," says Ms. Todd. "He also gave us some insight into how the project might be affected if the state assumes responsibility for court facilities."

● For more information about these and other services provided by the AOC's Facilities Unit, contact Robert Emerson, 415-865-7981; e-mail: robert .emerson@jud.ca.gov. ■

# County Profile

## Santa Cruz



The main courthouse, located in the city of Santa Cruz, was dedicated in 1968.

Geographic area: 445 square miles, located on the central coast of California

**Population:** According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population is 255,602. Since 1990, the population has increased approximately 11.3 percent.

**Demographics:** Age:  $0-19 \approx 28\%$ ;  $20-39 \approx 28\%$ ;  $40-59 \approx 30\%$ ;  $60-79 \approx 11\%$ ;  $80+\approx 3\%$ 

Race/Ethnicity: white  $\approx$  48%; Hispanic/Latino  $\approx$  27%; Asian  $\approx$  3.5%; black/African American  $\approx$  1%; American Indian/Alaska Native  $\approx$  1%; some other race/ethnicity  $\approx$  15%; two or more races/ethnicities  $\approx$  4.5%

Number of court locations: 3

Number of authorized judges: 10

Number of court staff: 140

Caseload: Filings for fiscal year 2000–2001 totaled 54,987

Annual court operating budget: \$15.5 million as of January 2002

**Presiding judge:** Robert B. Yonts, Jr. **Executive officer:** Christine Patton

**Of note:** Santa Cruz County is home to the only state monarch butterfly preserve in California. It provides a temporary home for more than 100,000 monarch butterflies each winter.

Sources: Superior Court of Santa Cruz County; County of Santa Cruz; California Department of Finance; U.S. Census Bureau

## **Second Appellate District Launches E-Filing Project**

The Second Appellate District recently launched the first electronic filing ("e-filing") pilot project in the California appellate courts. The goal of the project is to develop appropriate procedures for e-filing civil appeals and evaluate their usefulness. E-filing programs are already under way in many superior courts, including those in Alameda, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, and San Francisco Counties.

Starting on March 11, the Second Appellate District has invited and encouraged counsel in civil appeals to file electronic records ("erecords") and electronic briefs ("e-briefs") in addition to the required paper copies of such documents.

#### **HOW IT WORKS**

Before they file, parties must agree to submit an e-record in addition to the paper copies. Counsel must also submit a written proposal to the clerk's office describing what they propose to file. The court reviews the proposal and, if it approves of the plan, sets time frames and advises

counsel on the next steps.

"The court will work with counsel as long as [counsel's] plan meets the minimum requirements," says Joseph A. Lane, Clerk/Administrator of the Second Appellate District. "But they should realize that the usefulness of e-records and e-briefs will depend heavily on their completeness and ease of use."

E-filings must meet the following requirements:

☐ E-records and e-briefs must be stored on Windows-compatible CD-ROMs.

☐ E-records and e-briefs must be identical in content to their paper counterparts.

□ E-records and e-briefs must either come with their own viewing programs or be viewable using (a) a program such as Adobe Acrobat that is downloadable from the Internet at no cost to the user, (b) both Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator, or (c) Microsoft Word.

☐ E-records and e-briefs must be free of computer viruses.

□ E-records and e-briefs must be accompanied by a statement, preferably within or attached to the packaging, that (a) provides instructions for viewing the record or brief and the minimum equipment required for doing so and (b) verifies the absence of computer viruses and describes the software used to determine this.

Santa Cruz

☐ Five paper copies of each e-brief and e-record, all in the required form, must be filed.

☐ E-records and e-briefs may be filed no later than 15 days after the last paper brief.

Beyond these basic requirements, the court prefers that parties file a single CD-ROM containing (a) the reporter's transcript (searchable); (b) a joint appendix in lieu of a clerk's transcript, including images of all exhibits (searchable); (c) copies of all cited authorities; and (d) all the briefs hyperlinked to each other, to the record, and to the full texts of all cited authorities.

• For more information, contact Joseph A. Lane, Clerk/Administrator of the Second Appellate District, 213-830-7000.

MAY-JUNE 2002 COURT NEWS

# Report Shows Increased **Access for Families**

federal grant program to ex-Apand services for families with children in California's family courts has greatly increased parents' access to and visitation with their children, according to a new Judicial Council report to the Legislature.

Launched five years ago, the Access to Visitation Grant Program was designed to assist families with the process of separation and divorce so that parents and children do not lose contact with each other. The report is titled California's Access to Visitation Grant Program for Enhancing Responsibility and Opportunity for Nonresidential Parents-The First Five Years: Report to the Legislature. Among other findings, it shows that:

☐ With the support of federal grant funding, free and low-cost sliding-scale services-such as supervised visitation and exchange services, parent education, and group counseling—are now available in approximately 30 of the state's 58 counties.

☐ More than 15,000 parents who have separated since the inception of the grant program have had contact with their children because of the program.

☐ Many of the supervised visitation and parent education programs that have been established through the Access to Visitation Grant Program have become "best practice" models that can be used as model pilot projects nationally as well as in California.

Each year beginning in 1997, and subject to the availability of funding, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has awarded a total of \$10 million in block grants to all states to promote access and visitation programs that increase noncustodial parents' involvement in their children's lives. Nationally the funds are used for mediation (both voluntary and mandatory), counseling, education, development of parenting plans, visitation enforcement (including monitoring, supervision, and neutral drop-off and

pick-up), and development of guidelines for visitation and alternative custody arrangements. California, however, is limited by statute to using the money for supervised visitation and exchange services, parent education, and group counseling for parents and children.

The report gives the Legislature details of the programs funded in federal fiscal years 1997–2001 and provides an overview of program administration and accomplishments, review and selection processes, reporting requirements, participant data, and the scope and availability of support services to families with children in family

In addition to sending the report to the Legislature, the council also forwarded a copy to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. After reviewing the report, the agency commented that California's Access to Visitation Grant Program is "both instructive and exem-

plary" and that "other court systems might benefit from [its] lead."

The report does not contain any specific recommendations but does present possible actions for improving parents' access to and visitation with their children, including:

- 1. Establishment of mandatory training and education requirements for service providers;
- 2. Expansion of the program's services to the courts and communities that are currently not funded, especially in rural areas;
- 3. Recognition of these programs as necessary in the continuum of court-based services for parents and children; and
- 4. Identification of adequate resources for these ser-
- For more information on the Access to Visitation Grant Program, contact Shelly Danridge, Access to Visitation Grant Coordinator, Administrative Office of the Courts' Center for Families, Children & the Courts, 415-865-7565; e-mail: shelly .danridge@jud.ca.gov. ■

### **Drug Court Claims**

Continued from page 1

- But after completing drug court: **▶** Seventy percent of the participants were employed, as opposed to the 38 percent who had been employed at the time of entry into the program;
- Eleven percent of the participants, while in the program, had obtained general education diplomas or high school diplomas, 8 percent had earned vocational certificates, and 1 percent had completed college;
- Twelve percent of participants had transitioned from homelessness and acquired housing; and
- **▶** Twenty percent of participants had obtained driver licenses and car insurance.

"Often the defendants we see have not received a lot of positive feedback in their lives," says Judge Stevens. "Drug courts provide judges with the opportunity to provide encouragement instead of just punishment."

### **Scenes From a Drug Court**

In May, in recognition of National Drug Court Month, the California courts are celebrating the success of drug court graduates through an online photo exhibition on the judicial branch's public Web site. The online show was developed collaboratively by the courts, the AOC, other public agencies, communitybased organizations, and individual counselors.

To view the exhibition, visit www.courtinfo.ca.gov /programs/drugcourts/.

#### **DEVELOPMENT OF DRUG COURTS**

The first structured drug court was created in Dade County, Florida, in 1989. During the 1990s, drug courts emerged as an alternative to incarceration for substance-abusing offenders, thanks to a nationwide grassroots effort led by the courts.

In California, the first drug court was begun in 1993 in Oakland. Currently, California has more than 158 drug courts, and 50 of the 58 counties contain at least one.

In a drug court, a judge heads a team that focuses on sobriety and accountability. Drug courts employ features such as early identification and placement in treatment, access to a continuum of drug treatment and rehabilitative services, a nonadversarial approach, and regular and ongoing judicial monitoring.

#### **COST SAVINGS**

The study assessed the costeffectiveness of drug courts in terms of incarceration costs and fees or fines paid by drug court participants. It concluded that during the life of the study, the \$14 million in DCPA program funds together with other funds that support California drug courts saved the state approximately \$43 million. Specifically, the assessment showed that:

- ▶ A total of 425,014 jail days were avoided, with an averted cost of approximately \$26 million;
- ▶ A total of 227,894 prison days were avoided, with an



A recent drug court graduate, with her drug-free baby, rejoices as she hears that the charges against her have been dismissed following her completion of the program. For many graduates, the completion of drug court and a substance abuse treatment program marks a new beginning not only in their own lives but in the lives of their families and communities. Photo: Courtesy of the Superior Court of Orange County

averted cost of approximately \$16 million; and

▶ Participants who completed drug court programs paid almost \$1 million in fees and fines imposed by the court.

But those involved in making drug courts work say that more important than the monetary savings are the positive effects drug courts have on the participants, their families, and their communities.

"We work together, confronting the clients again and again to stay in treatment and improve their lives," says Superior Court of Santa Clara County Judge Stephen V. Manley. Judge Manley not only co-chaired the steering committee that helped to implement the study and plan its evaluation but oversees his county's drug court, chairs the

**Drug Court Systems Executive** Steering Committee, and serves on the Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee with Judge Stevens. Judge Manley adds that drug courts "offer clients a chance to change and to attain goals they never dreamed

The DCPA Final Report is the first in a series of drug court reports. The Judicial Council and ADP will continue to evaluate California drug courts based on these preliminary results. To view the full report, visit

www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference /documents/dc\_partnership.pdf/. For more information on drug courts or on the study, contact Nancy Taylor, Administrative Office of the Courts, 415-865-7614; e-mail: nancytaylor@jud .ca.gov. ■